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## POSTERS/MEM

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WANTED: Hollywood Studio Magazine, pre-1971 ONLY (Volumes 1 thru 5). Donald Brian Johnson, 3329 S. 56th St. #611, Omaha, NE 68106. (donaldbrian@msn.com) [CI 593]

For Sale: Rudolph Valentino 78 rpm record from 1923. Like new. Make offer, call Don 314-353-4161 [592]
FOR SALE: Books from Movies Stars, film Noir and Films. Send SASE for free list to: Books from the Silver Screen, 6770 Runkles Rd., Mount Airy, MD 21771. Email: coxgerlinde@comcast.net [CI 594]

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# Wendy Wilde

**SAMUEL CLAESSON**

Wendy Wilde was one of the more promising actresses of the 1950s, with roles in *The Wayward Girl* (1957), *Diary of a High School Bride* (1959), *Girls Town* (1959), and *Ask Any Girl* (1959). This gorgeous redhead was a familiar face on such television series as *26 Men*, *Matinee Theater* and *The Larry Finley Show*. She seemed destined for stardom until disappearing almost entirely from the public eye. I found that she was living in Santa Clarita, California, where she's active in her community and spends her days volunteering with College of the Canyons and The Boys & Girls Club, among other organizations. Her son Marshall LaPlante is an actor, comedian, and photographer who appeared in *Slumber Party Massacre II* (1987). We appreciate that Wendy, who's now known as Joyce Rogers, consented to this interview.

Samuel Claesson: What made you want to be an actress?

**Wendy Wilde:** I was working at a bank operating a switchboard. It wasn't something I wanted to do. One of my co-workers was submitting a photograph of herself for a beauty contest and suggested I do the same, which I did. I won and quickly got television work. It wasn't long after that I rented a room at the Hollywood Studio Club

SC: Your name was Sandra Greenfield. How did you get the name Wendy Wilde?

**Wendy Wilde**: My agent Bob Payton thought that I looked like Wendy in *Peter Pan* (1953), so he suggested I change it to Wendy. It wasn't a good decision in hindsight because actor Cornel Wilde had a daughter named Wendy who was an aspiring actress, so there was some confusion as to whether I was actually her...

Bob wasn't a good agent. He used to be a vaudevillian actor. He just wasn't proactive enough. I tried finding better representation, but it went nowhere because the agents in Hollywood had more clients than they knew what to do with.

SC: You roomed at the Hollywood Studio Club with budding starlets like Nan Peterson, Barbara Eden, Joan Blackman, Sandra Wirth, and Lori Nelson. Were you close with them?

**Wendy Wilde**: Nan was one of my best friends. I saw her a few years before she died... she was bedridden, but stood up to hug me. We had lunch together and I asked her to visit me in Santa Clarita sometime where I live. I wasn't close with Barbara [Eden], and her mother whom I met was even more distant than she was. I saw Barbara at the Tropicana Hotel years later where she had a gig but she pretended like she didn't remember me, saying, "I didn't bring my glasses." She knew who I was, though. I helped her get her first modeling gig, you know.

SC: What can you tell us about *She Demons* (1958)?

**Wendy Wilde**: I was one of the She Demons and had to wear a mask and a costume that got very hot... I always wondered why I never got screen credit for that.

SC: You were on Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life*.

**Wendy Wilde**: Yes, I replaced the papier-mâché duck that came down from the rafters. That was a good gig. Groucho was wonderful to work with and had a great sense of humor. I remember years later seeing him at the supermarket with his girlfriend, and he made a joke that the supermarket is the best place to find duck. I wish I could've seen him once more. My father was ill at Cedars of Lebanon where Groucho was dying. I saw his room and wanted to see him, but it had "DO NOT ENTER" written on the door. I'll always regret not going in.

SC: How about *Death Valley Days* ("Mission to the Mountains")?

**Wendy Wilde**: It was a great role. I co-starred with John Hoyt. He was a sweetheart, and in a way more fatherly than my own father. He helped me off the horses, as I wasn't a very experienced rider. I saw him years later when I was working at a hardware store. I wasn't doing well financially and a bit depressed because I went through a contentious divorce. He bought a lot of wallpaper from us.

SC: What about *Lock Up* ("The Case of Joe Slate")?

**Wendy Wilde**: I appeared in an episode as a wife who gets murdered. We did a scene where I had to tumble down a hill, but I was hesitant because I was pregnant, unbeknownst to the director. I probably shouldn't have done it, but I didn't want anyone thinking I was difficult.

SC: Was there ever a role you auditioned for, but didn't get? How about a role that you were offered, but rejected?

**Wendy Wilde**: I don't recall a specific film, but I auditioned for a toothpaste commercial. The director gave me some great advice, though... he said ,"You've got to dress nicer when you go to these auditions because they consider that when casting you." There wasn't a lot I could do about that. I was poor. My parents wouldn't help me. They were very against me being in the movies.

SC: Why did you quit acting?

**Wendy Wilde**: I married a man named Maurice [LaPlante] and we moved further south where he was working. It got increasingly difficult to commute to the studios and I just stopped doing it. It's a shame because I started getting some good roles. I got two sons out of our marriage, so I can't be upset about it.

**ABOVE:** Wendy Wilde and John Hoyt on Death Valley Days, "Mission to the Mountains" (1960).

**LEFT:** Anita Sands and Wendy Wilde in The Diary of a High School Bride (1959).